

# Parent concerned with air at Jockvale

By Jeffrey Morris  
Independent Staff

A year ago, Barrhaven residents had to fight to keep the Carleton Board of Education from busing their children to inner Nepean.

The compromise was to have the surplus of students in the overcrowded schools housed in portable classrooms.

But, now, concerned parents are upset at what they call environmentally unfriendly learning conditions in the portable classrooms at Jockvale Elementary School.

Karl Gildner voiced his concerns over the poor ventilation in the portables in the fall to the Barrhaven Education Committee. Gildner has two children at Jockvale - a daughter in Grade 3 and a son in Grade 1. Gildner's son is an asthmatic with a severe allergy problem.

Gildner has been after the CBE for something to be done about the air quality in the portable classrooms at Jockvale. He is in the process of going through the province's Freedom of Information Act to find out what has been done.

"I know some work has been done, but to what extent we don't know. We can't get an answer from the CBE," said Gildner.

According to Gildner, the problems are in the water that comes into the school from the playground. Last week's thaw caused a "small lake" behind the school where the portables are, and the water tracked into the portables soaks into the rugs. Because of the poor air ventilation,

the water will, according to Gildner, cause moulds and mildew to gather on the rugs.

"The rugs are wet and damp, and the moulds will have a profound affect," said Gildner. "Also, kids are walking around in the water and could fall in. It's just not a healthy learning environment."

"I know for a fact that some teachers have developed asthma and others have developed chronic fatigue syndrome. The board said the problem affects only one per cent of the school population, but considering that children are more susceptible, I would say that maybe 30 per cent of them are affected."

The answer, according to Gildner, is to replace the old portable classrooms with port-a-pac units, similar to the one installed at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School. Port-a-pacs are semi-permanent structures that have a concrete foundation and are connected to the school.

"I have nothing against port-

ables if guidelines were properly established," said Gildner, "but I do have a problem with the air quality problem. I believe the port-a-pacs would be an excellent solution to the problem. Better yet, a new elementary school or two in Barrhaven would be even better because we need them."

Though the board is not in a position to spend the millions of dollars required to replace its portable classrooms with port-a-pacs, Gildner says the board should consider deficit financing.

"The CBE has a pay cash policy. Why not try deficit financing. They have a consistent tax

base to draw from. If they need \$10 million, why not take out a mortgage? Companies and people do it - even the government does it."

"We pay the school board good money through our taxes for them to provide a good, clean environment."